More than 100 African tribal art objects relating to women, fertility and healing are on long-term loan to the Art Gallery from Dr. A. Kelly Maness, Jr. (P’00). Dr. Maness began collecting art nearly thirty years ago while he was a medical student. He acquired his collection by purchasing from dealers, galleries, other collectors, and African “runners.” While he has never traveled to Africa himself, he has read and researched African art extensively. His collection has been shown in his offices at Wendover OB/GYN & Infertility, Inc., but this exhibition represents that the first time many of these objects have been available to the public-at-large.

The Maness Collection will be displayed in the vitrines at the entrance of the Art Gallery. As an “exhibition-in-progress,” the objects will be displayed initially with only basic information identifying the country of origin and the culture/tribe that created the object. Throughout the rest of this academic year, selected objects will be featured weekly with more in-depth information provided (researched by Taryn Busch ’00, who just returned from the College’s study abroad program in Ghana).

Most of the work in the collection dates from the 20th century and comes from West and Central Africa. Among the tribes represented are Yoruba, Ashanti, Mossi, Fanti, Baule, Ibibio, Lobi, Yaka, Lega, Senufo, Dogon, Dan, Bamana, Hemba, Azande, Kamba (Kenya, East Africa), Kuba, Tangale, Fulani, Kran, Chockwe, Mende, Ewe, Aja, Ibo Kulango, and Urhobo.

The Maness Collection is a tremendous addition to the Gallery’s resources, one that will enhance the study of religion, art, history, sociology, International Studies, Women’s Studies, and many other disciplines. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Maness for sharing these objects, and his passion and knowledge about them, with us.